

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01 DHA-02 /071 W

-----069898 160157Z /20

R 151443Z JUL 77

FM AMEMBASSY VICTORIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 469

INFO AMEMBASSY ANTANANARIVO

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

AMEMBASSY PORT LOUIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L VICTORIA 422

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PUUT, SE

SUBJECT: SEYCHELLES WEEKLY REVIEW; JULY 15

REF: VICTORIA 405

1. SEYCHELLES NEW INDEPENDENT WEEKLY NEWSPAPER "WEEKEND LIFE," IN ITS THIRD ISSUE, ACCORDED FRONT PAGE COVERAGE TO THE BRIEF DETENTION OF MANCHAM SUPPORTERS THE NIGHT BEFORE JUNE 29 INDEPENDENCE ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS (VICTORIA 381). PRESS TREATMENT INCLUDED EXPLANATORY STATEMENTS FROM PRESIDENT RENE AND POLICE COMMISSIONER PILLAY AND INTERVIEWS WITH SEVERAL UN-NAMED DETAINEES. DETAINEES SAID THEY WERE FRIGHTENED BY THEIR EXPERIENCE BUT NOT ILL-TREATED. TWO DAYS BEFORE NEWS-PAPER HIT THE STREETS (BUT AFTER GOVERNMENT BECAME AWARE THAT A STORY ON THE DETENTIONS WAS GOING TO BE PUBLISHED), MINISTRY OF INFORMATION ISSUED BRIEF COMMUNIQUE. COMMUNIQUE STATED THAT POLICE COMMISSIONER HAD RECEIVED INFORMATION THAT "A SITUATION COULD DEVELOP WHICH WOULD CONSTITUTE A THREAT TO SECURITY" AND THAT 16 PEOPLE WERE DETAINED FOR "INTERVIEWS." FIVE OF DETAINEES WERE NOT RELEASED UNTIL AFTER IN-CONFIDENTIAL

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DEPENDENCE DAY STADIUM ACTIVITIES WERE COMPLETED. ACCORDING PUBLISHER, THERE HAS BEEN NO ADVERSE GOVERNMENTAL REACTION. (COMMENT: IN SOME-WHAT RISKY VENTURE, WEEKEND LIFE HAS SUCCEEDED IN TAKING GOVERNMENT AT ITS WORD THAT PRESS FREEDOM WILL BE OBSERVED AND CRITICISM OF GOVERNMENT ALLOWED. NONETHELESS, IT WAS AN EMBARRASSMENT FOR GOVERNMENT TO BE PRESSURED INTO PUBLICIZING FACT OF DETENTIONS AND GOS MAY BE LESS TOLERANT IN THE FUTURE).

2. BEST SELLER AT LOCAL BOOK STORES IS NEWLY PUBLISHED PAMPHLET CONTAINING EXTRACTS FROM PUBLIC STATEMENTS MADE OVER PAST 13 YEARS BY PRESIDENT RENE. EXCERPTS FROM THE PAMPHLET, WHICH IS ENTITLED "PHILOSOPHY OF A STRUGGLE" AND DEALS WITH BROAD RANGE OF POLITIV L, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL TOPICS, ARE BROADCAST ON RADIO AND APPEAR ALMOST DAILY IN GOVERNMENT PUBLISHED NEWS-PAPER.

3. IN A CLEAR BREAK WITH THE PAST, THE GOVERNMENT HAS ANNOUNCED BAN ON "MISS SEYCHELLES" AND OTHER BEAUTY CONTESTS. INFORMATION MINISTER MICHEL, IN A RADIO BROADCAST, SAID NEW REGIME FEELS SUCH EVENTS "EXPLOIT OUR WOMEN FOR COMMERCIAL ENDS" AND ARE "REMINISCENT OF ANCIENT SLAVE MARKETS." GOVERNMENT, HE ADDED, WAS ACTING "TO PRESERVE THE DIGNITY OF SEYCHELLOIS WOMEN."

4. IN PAST TWO WEEKS, MINISTER OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS BERLOUIS AND POLICE COMMISSIONER PILLAY HAVE VISITED NUMBER OF THINLY-POPULATED OUTLYING ISLANDS. STATED PURPOSE OF VISITS IS ESTABLISHMENT OF COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM WHICH WOULD ALERT GOVERNMENT TO THE PRESENCE OF ANY GROUP WHICH MIGHT BE MARSHALLED IN THOSE AREAS FOR COUNTER COUP ATTEMPT.

5. ON JULY 12, NEW GOVERNMENT HELD FIRST CABINET MEETING AT WHICH NEW MINISTERS TOOK OATH OF OFFICE AND PLEDGED LOYALTY TO REGIME.

6. IN THE SIX WEEKS SINCE JUNE 5 COUP, DELIBERATE EFFORT HAS BEEN CONFIDENTIAL

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MADE TO PROMOTE THE USE OF FRENCH AND CREOLE AT THE EXPENSE OF ENGLISH. USE OF FRENCH AND CREOLE IS NOW PREDOMINANT IN THE DAILY GOVERNMENT NEWSPAPER AND ON RADIO.
MATTSON

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, POLITICAL SUMMARIES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 15-Jul-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977VICTOR00422
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770253-0597
Format: TEL
From: VICTORIA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770751/aaaabruq.tel
Line Count: 98
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
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Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 VICTORIA 405
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 08-Feb-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1842874
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SEYCHELLES WEEKLY REVIEW; JULY 15
TAGS: PINS, SOPN, SE
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/5d2fc06a-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009